



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

IRAQ

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROJECT

TECHNICAL BRIEF Supportive Supervision for Quality Improvement in Iraq

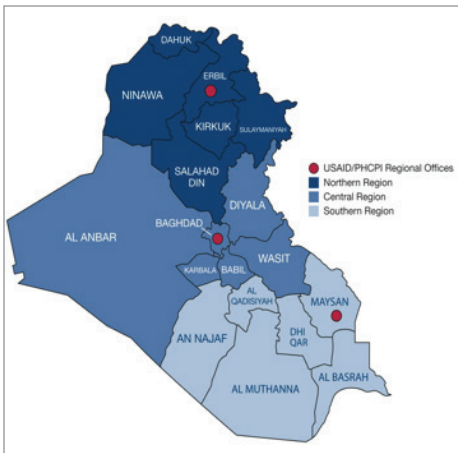


Photo: USAID / PHCPI

Overview

The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) is in the process of reforming its primary health care (PHC) system and restructuring the health services provided. Within this context, the concept of Supportive Supervision for Quality Improvement has emerged as a way to introduce high quality health services within all health institutions and facilities. The PHC sector was one of the main sectors targeted as it represents the first point of contact for individuals within the health system and bears the bulk of the burden.

Supportive Supervision is based on self-assessment by the health center staff and QI team, includes regular feedback from community groups and stakeholders and periodic visits from external supervisors. It is characterized by the existence of a Technical Advisory Group which provides continuing medical education (CME) credits and is a continuous process that occurs during routine work and through online mentoring.

USAID's Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI), in collaboration with the MOH, is working hard to implement successful Supportive Supervision by providing informational materials and technical support, as well as online courses, workshops, and on-the-job trainings. The project has made creative models emphasizing the optimal use of available resources in order to solve existing health disparities that are consistent with local settings and the needs of each region. Successful Supportive Supervision will contribute to the presence of high-quality health care services and use that leads to the promotion of community health, especially among vulnerable groups such as mothers and children under the age of five.

PHCPI Focuses on Guidelines, Training and QI Teams

Within the field of Supportive Supervision (SS) and Quality Improvement (QI), PHCPI:

- Conducted several training courses in Baghdad and Erbil to train supervisors on SS and QI concepts and related issues.
- Implemented many workshops and on-the-job training courses in all Iraqi governorates to train local health staff and form quality improvement teams within the Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs).
- Performed follow-up workshops for supervisors in Baghdad and Erbil every two to three months to build upon lessons learned and recognize achievements.
- PHCPI coordinators conducted monthly assessments in the governorates to monitor progress.

Throughout implementation, PHCPI was able to reach 360 clinics throughout 18 provinces in Iraq. Additionally, 56 supervisors were trained on Supportive Supervision while 1,205 PHC staff members became part of PHCC Quality Improvement Teams.

Supportive Supervision Helps PHC Centers to Identify and Address Gaps

PHCCs familiarize communities to their services through different programs directed towards diverse categories of people. To improve performance and achieve the best results, all activities and initiatives should be designed to ensure the utilization of all available materials, funds, and human resources to obtain the desired results. To

Continues on page 2



Photo: USAID / PHCPI



Photo: USAID / PHCPI

support the development of a system that can take on a wider range of responsibilities. Countries worldwide are beginning to introduce the concept of quality into their health care systems because focusing on access alone has not demonstrated satisfactory results.

PHCPI's Supportive Supervision program has improved communication between PHCC supervisors and staff which has led to great improvement in the identification of gaps in services provided by PHCCs. Active participation of PHCC staff to find and implement solutions is now much more common and integrated than previously practiced.

With improved clinical services as the ultimate goal, successful managerial and administrative oversight is necessary for the identification of gaps and weaknesses within a particular PHCC as well as the identification of the most suitable and locally appropriate solutions. Through the development of guidelines, training materials, and quality improvement teams, PHCPI has helped Iraqi PHCCs to recognize the importance of supportive supervision for quality improvement, enhanced healthcare and, ultimately, better health outcomes.